

DELAWARE**Steven L. Blessing, MA****Director**

Delaware Department of Health and Social Services



Steven Blessing has served the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Public Health (DPH) in various leadership positions for nearly 30 years and was named DPH Division Director in November 2023. In this role of directing one of the largest and most impactful divisions in state government, Director Blessing oversees over 1,000 staff and manages a \$433 million budget in grant and state funding.

Previously, Director Blessing served as Interim DPH Division Director since September 2023. He was named DPH Deputy Director in October 2022. Director Blessing also served as Emergency Medical Services Director, Paramedic Administrator, and Executive Assistant to the Division Director. His longest tenure was 12 years at the helm of the Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness Section (EMSPS), which he led as Section Chief. As EMSPS Chief, Director Blessing led the development and expansion of DHSS' response capacity during health and natural disasters.

Other notable career accomplishments include policy and legislative support for the development of Delaware's statewide trauma system, leadership in the development of statewide electronic reporting for EMS, the Delaware EMS Reform Act of 1999, and leadership in creation of the Public Health Preparedness program in Delaware. Director Blessing also was elected by his peers to a term as President of the National Association of State EMS Officials from 2008-2010. He has also participated in meaningful projects at both the state and national level with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Academy of Medicine, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.



During the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) response, Director Blessing managed the State Health Operations Center (SHOC) and later served as the Incident Commander for the final phases of DPH's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. The COVID-19 SHOC event was the longest and most complex response in DPH history, running for more than two years. Director Blessing also managed the SHOC during Hurricanes Sandy and Irene, the Ebola crisis, and other disease and weather-related emergencies.

Director Blessing is a former U.S. Army officer and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Delaware and a Master's degree in Business from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. He resides in Bear with his wife, Trish, sons Ethan and Emory, and their three dogs. He also has an adult son, William, who is a PhD chemist in Boston. In his spare time, Director Blessing, and his family like to spend time boating, fishing, and crabbing on the Bohemia River near Chesapeake City, Maryland.

